



November 18, 2020

To: Concord Select Board Chair Linda Escobedo; Select Board Clerk Susan Bates;
Select Board Members Terri Ackerman, Jane Hotchkiss and Matt Johnson;
Town Manager Stephen Crane

Subject: Open Meeting Law and Transportation Advisory Committee

Dear Ms. Escobedo, Mr. Crane, and Members of the Concord Select Board,

The League of Women Voters of Concord-Carlisle (LWVCC) believes that democratic government depends upon informed and active participation by citizens in government and requires that governmental bodies protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings in compliance with the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, and making public records accessible.

The LWVCC recently learned about an Open Meeting Law complaint against the newly formed nine-member Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) whose first meeting on September 9th was not a public meeting. We understand that the initial decision to hold such a meeting was based on designating TAC a "hybrid" committee and not a public body and therefore not subject to the requirements of the Open Meeting Law. The Open Meeting Law doesn't provide for "hybrid" town committees. In fact, the Committee's charge, adopted by the Select Board on March 9, 2020 and endorsed as drafted by the Town Manager at that meeting, included the notation that the committee would observe the Open Meeting Law.

The Town of Concord has a long history of creating committees to advise the Select Board and Town Manager on issues related to town and school affairs. TAC is similar in composition to the Middle School Building Committee and the Capital Planning Committee formed from recommendations made by Envision Concord. These committees are considered public bodies conforming to the Open Meeting Law. We are requesting that the Transportation Advisory Committee be formally confirmed as a public body, operating under the Open Meeting Law, to ensure open discussions, record keeping and posting of meetings, so citizens may attend and become informed. It is our hope that the Town of Concord shares the League's commitment to an informed citizenry and will adhere strictly to both the requirements and spirit of the Open Meeting Law.

Thank you for your consideration.

Julie Rohwein, President
League of Women Voters of Concord-Carlisle
President@lwvcc.org

Cc: Kaari Mai Tari, Concord Town Clerk